FAH 50: Impressionism and Post-Impressionism
Fall 2014

Jeremy Melius
jeremy.melius@tufts.edu
617-627-5384 (7-5384 from campus phone)
Lecture: Tuesday and Thursday, 3:00-4:15pm, Aidekman 12
Office Hours: Thursday, 10:30-11:30am, 11 Talbot Ave., third floor, or by appointment

Course Description:

This course offers an examination of the artists associated with Impressionism and Post-Impressionism in France towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, as well as related movements elsewhere in Europe. Focusing on key moments in this history, the course aims to recover the real intensity and strangeness of art’s involvement with modernity. In what ways did artists resist the modernity’s traumatic upheavals? How did they help to hurry them along? What kinds of new classed and gendered identities did art at this time wish to produce? How did advanced art work to incorporate its supposed others—the “commercial,” the “sentimental,” the “academic,” the “exotic,” the “primitive”? Could the texture of modernity itself be staged in the very handling of paint? Investigation of these and other broad questions will be grounded in close attention to particular works of art. Artists considered will include Courbet, Manet, Monet, Pissarro, Degas, Cassatt, Menzel, Seurat, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, and others. Topics will include the rise of urbanism; the growth and redevelopment of Paris; landscape painting; the triumph of the bourgeoisie; the gendering of art; the birth of the avant-garde. An effort will be made to highlight works on view nearby in Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts and other local collections.

Learning Objectives:

• Become familiar with later nineteenth-century artistic practice in Europe
• Learn to analyze, interpret, and write about paintings and sculptures effectively
• Develop a critical understanding of artworks’ cultural and historical contexts

Course Requirements:

The course will include two papers (3-4 pages and 7-8 pages in length), an in-class midterm, a short identification quiz, and a take-home exam. Detailed prompts for each paper will be issued well in advance. Both require visiting the MFA in Boston or another local collection. You will be expected to attend lectures faithfully and assimilate their contents, participating in class discussion. Lectures will often consider material not addressed in the readings, and develop lines of thought not found elsewhere.

Grading:

• Participation and attendance 5%
• First paper 15%
• Mid-term exam 20%
• Second paper 30%
• Final quiz and exam 30%
Please note: paper deadlines are **FIRM**. There will be an automatic grade penalty for any paper submitted late without satisfactory explanation: “satisfactory explanation” almost always means explanation offered in advance and **approved by me**. Computer or printer problems will not be accepted as an excuse: be sure to back up your work! Papers must be stapled and submitted in hard copy, not over e-mail. (Double-sided printing is strongly encouraged: save a tree.)

**Academic Integrity:**

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity, and Tufts holds its student strictly accountable. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. The consequences for violations can be severe. It is critical that you understand the requirements of ethical behavior and academic work as described in the university’s Academic Handbook. If you ever have a question about the expectations concerning a particular assignment in the course, be sure to ask me for clarification. Students suspected of academic integrity violations will be reported to the Dean of Student Affairs Office.

**Student Accessibility Services:**

Tufts University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Any student who may need accommodations in this class on account of a documented disability should please contact me during office hours as soon as possible. For information on the process of requesting accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Services, Dowling Hall, Suite 720, 617-627-4539, Accessibility@tufts.edu.

**Electronics Policy:**

At Tufts, professors set their own policies for the use of electronics in the classroom. I will allow the use of laptops, tablets, etc. for note-taking purposes **only**, and only insofar as use of them does not disturb other members of the class. Please do not abuse this privilege. Also be sure to silence all phones, pagers, etc. **Lectures may not be recorded without written permission from me.** I hope you can share my commitment to making our time together in the classroom free from distractions.

I am happy to discuss these and other course policies at any time.

**Required Texts:**


Both titles are available for purchase at the Tufts Bookstore or online. The rest of your readings will be available as PDFs on Trunk, unless otherwise indicated. All readings should be read **in advance** of the lecture to which they correspond. You should be prepared to discuss assigned texts in class. Readings are required unless otherwise indicated. Note well: the reading load varies. Please plan accordingly.
Recommended Texts:


A selection of additional titles will be put on reserve at Tisch Library.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings:

Please note: the following plan of lectures is provisional. This is the kind of course where it may be desirable to alter the emphasis and “coverage” of lectures as we go along. We may well end up covering fewer topics than announced below in order to give the topics we do cover the thought they deserve.

**Week One**

9.2  Introduction
9.4  Introduction, continued
T. J. Clark, “Introduction,” 3-22. [PML]
J. Rubin, “Introduction,” and “The Names of Impressionism,” 4-6, 9-48. [I]

**Week Two**

9.9  Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century
T. J. Clark, “The View from Notre Dame,” 3-78. [PML]

9.11 Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century, continued

**Week Three**

9.16 Manet and the Painting of Modern Life
J. Rubin, “The Artist as Subject,” 51-90. [I]

9.18 Manet and the Painting of Modern Life, continued

**Week Four**

9.23 The Gender of Impressionism
J. Rubin, “Feminine and Masculine,” 221-62. [I]

9.25 Odd Man Out: Degas
J. Rubin, “Choreography and Science,” 179-218. [I]
Week Five
9.30 The City in the Country
J. Rubin, “Naturalism in Plein-air,” 93-132. [I]
T. J. Clark, “The Environs of Paris,” 147-204: begin reading. [PML]

10.2 The City in the Country, continued
T. J. Clark, “The Environs of Paris,” 147-204: finish reading. [PML]

Week Six
10.7 Pissarro and the Politics of Landscape
J. Rubin, “Places, People, and Traditions” and “Opposition or Complicity?,” 133-158, 263-92. [I]

10.9 Another Painting of Modern Life? Early Cézanne
J. Rubin, “Towards an Aftermath,” 365-72. [I]
A. Dombrowski, Cézanne, Murder, and Modern Life, selection.

- FIRST PAPER DUE AT START OF CLASS ON THURSDAY 10.9 -

Week Seven
10.15 Midterm Review
10.16 MIDTERM EXAM

Week Eight
10.21 Art and Embodiment in Berlin: Menzel
SUGGESTED: M. Fried, Menzel’s Realism (selections).

10.22 British Painting: From Pre-Raphaelitism to Aestheticism
T. Barringer, “Pre-Raphaelites and Aesthetes,” in Reading the Pre-Raphaelites, 135-167.
A. Grieve, “Rossetti and the Scandal of Art for Art’s Sake in the Early 1860s,” in After the Pre-Raphaelites, 17-31.

Week Nine
10.28 The Environs of Paris, Redux: “A Day in the Country”

10.30 The Sentimental Imagination

Week Ten
11.4 Neo-Impressionism: Seurat
J. Rubin, “Reassessment and Renewal,” 295-328. [I]
T.J. Clark, “Conclusion,” 259-68. [PML]

11.6 “Impressionism” in Sculpture: Rosso, Degas, Rodin

Week Eleven
11.11 NO CLASS (Veteran’s Day)
11.13 Janus-Faced Modernism: Van Gogh/Gauguin

Week Twelve
11.18 Symbolist Drift
Readings TBA.
11.20 Cézanne and the End of Impressionism
J. Rubin, “Towards an Aftermath,” 372-402. [I]
SUGGESTED: M. Schapiro, Paul Cézanne, 9-30.

- IN-CLASS IDENTIFICATION QUIZ ON TUESDAY 11.18 -

Week Thirteen
11.25 – 11.27 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

Week Fourteen
12.2 New Visions
M. Gorky, “The Lumière Cinematograph” (1896)
Addition readings TBA.
12.4 Conclusions
J. Rubin, “Other Media, Other Places,” 405-24. [I]

- SECOND PAPER DUE AT START OF CLASS ON THURSDAY 12.4 -

- TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE VIA EMAIL AT 9PM ON FRIDAY 12.12 -